

December 20, 1951

Dr. Tom C. Nelson  
Department of Biology  
Vanderbilt University  
Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Tom:

Your account of VU life provokes our sympathies, but it scarcely deviates from anyone's expectations. But enough's enough.

Your working here next year has its attractions: if I have any reservations, it is due to factors beyond my control. I assume that you're thinking in terms of a fellowship. The local pickings are rather slim, and not without their strings. Before discussing any such possibility, you ought to try the national competitions. There's a new entry: the National Science Foundation, though they're emphasizing predoctorals for the time being. But you must know the ropes in this league. We'll certify your acceptability for fellowship purposes, but between you and me this will have to be tentative. If you once win an award, there is usually not too much trouble amending the destinations. As to research program, cook up anything you'd be interested in, write it up in general terms, and let me hear about it. You probably would want to work on the mechanism of recombination, and this is general enough to cover almost anything we agree to later.

A personal conference on this might not be a bad idea. It would be too much to ask you to come way up here, although we'd be delighted if you could visit. However, I will be edging eastward (to Cincinnati) March 1 to 3. There is a 2d Cancer Research Conference then, sponsored by the A.C.N.S. and the N. C. I. They promised I wouldn't have to say a word about cancer, so I agreed. There might be a rather interesting genetics program, if they line up the speakers as intended. A conference doesn't exactly provide the best atmosphere for quiet conversation, but by the map, Cincinnati is only about half as far away from you as Madison. Do you think you could manage it, better to Madison, or to the Cann. mtg?

Sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg